

## What is "P"?

Phosphorus, often abbreviated as "P", is a nutrient commonly found in fertilizers used by homeowners and commercial applicators to maintain and improve the health and appearance of lawns and landscaping.

## What's the problem?

Using too much fertilizer can cause excess growth of algae when carried by runoff into water bodies. This, in turn, can cause algae blooms which can degrade water quality, produce toxins and result in taste and odor problems in our drinking water.

## What's the solution?

To help protect local surface waters and our drinking water supply, the City of Norman has adopted an ordinance regulating the use of manufactured fertilizers. The ordinance is a proactive effort to preserve and protect water bodies within the City of Norman limits including our municipal water supply, Lake Thunderbird. The ordinance limits the use of phosphorus - containing fertilizer and establishes rules for the application of all fertilizers.

Not sure how much, if any, fertilizer you need? Contact Oklahoma State University Extension for a soil test:  
<https://extension.okstate.edu/county/oklahoma/horticulture/index.html>



## Questions?

To view the complete text of the City of Norman Manufactured Fertilizer Ordinance, visit the City of Norman website at: [http://www.normanok.gov/content/storm-water-quality\\_](http://www.normanok.gov/content/storm-water-quality_)

Violating the ordinance may result in a fine of not less than \$50.00 nor more than \$750.00.

For information on the disposal of unneeded fertilizer, please contact Environmental Services at [HouseholdHazardousWaste@normanok.gov](mailto:HouseholdHazardousWaste@normanok.gov) (405) 366-5463.

For stormwater questions, please contact the Stormwater Division at [pwstormwater@normanok.gov](mailto:pwstormwater@normanok.gov) (405) 329-2524

# Keeping Our Waters "P" Free



# Did you know?

Lake Thunderbird has been identified by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality as having impaired water quality due to elevated levels of chlorophyll-a. The high level of chlorophyll -a is directly related to increased algae production caused by excess phosphorus in the lake.

## Understanding the Numbers on Your Fertilizer

All fertilizer labels have three numbers displayed. These numbers represent the nutrients nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

### Nitrogen (N)

Encourages above ground growth, foliage, and lush leaves.

### Phosphorus (P)

Encourages fruit/flower production and improves root health. Most soils in Norman already have sufficient P levels for a healthy lawn.



### Potassium (K)

Improves overall plant health.

## Dos & Don'ts at Home

- ✓ Obtain a soil test from a certified lab to check existing soil nutrient levels. If your soil has phosphorus levels greater than ten (10) parts per million (ppm) then no additional fertilizer is needed.
- ✓ Sweep or blow fertilizer that is on streets, driveways, and sidewalks back onto your yard or dispose of it properly.
- ✓ Use natural or organic fertilizer or other forms of naturally occurring phosphorus.
- ✓ Fertilize within the first six (6) months of turf establishment from seed or sod.
- ✓ Water within fourteen (14) hours of applying fertilizer.
- ✗ Don't apply fertilizer when it's raining, rain is in the forecast, or when soils are saturated or frozen.
- ✗ Don't apply fertilizer within twenty-five (25) feet of creeks, streams, and ponds.
- ✗ Don't blow or dump grass clippings, leaves, or any yard waste into streets, storm drains or waterways.
- ✗ Don't store open containers of fertilizer on impervious surfaces like streets, driveways, and sidewalks.

